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CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) A substantially rigid, force-sensing joystick, comprising:
a user-manipulable handle coupled to an electrically conductive drive plate; ~~and~~
an electrically conductive surface spaced apart from the drive plate,
wherein one or both of the drive plate and the conductive surface are segmented to produce
multiple capacitive sensing elements, such that a force applied to the handle causes a slight deflection of
the drive plate, enabling the force to be computed in at least two dimensions through changes detectable
in the capacitive sensing elements; and
one or more electrical controls on the handle.
2. (Original) The rigid, force-sensing joystick of claim 1, including four segments.
3. (Canceled)
4. (Original) The rigid, force-sensing joystick of claim 1, wherein the electrically conductive
drive plate is non-segmented, and the electrically conductive surface forms part of a printed-circuit
board having a segmented pattern.
5. (Original) The rigid, force sensing joystick of claim 4, requiring no soldered connections to
the circuit board.
6. (New) A substantially rigid, force-sensing joystick, consisting essentially of:
a user-manipulable handle coupled to an electrically conductive drive plate; and
an electrically conductive surface spaced apart from the drive plate,
wherein one or both of the drive plate and the conductive surface are segmented to produce
multiple capacitive sensing elements, such that a force applied to the handle causes a slight deflection of
the drive plate, enabling the force to be computed in at least two dimensions through changes detectable
in the capacitive sensing elements.

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7. (New) The rigid, force-sensing joystick of claim 6, including four segments.

8. (New) The rigid, force-sensing joystick of claim 6, further including one or more electrical controls on the handle.

9. (New) The rigid, force-sensing joystick of claim 6, wherein the electrically conductive drive plate is non-segmented, and the electrically conductive surface forms part of a printed-circuit board having a segmented pattern.

10. (New) A substantially rigid, force-sensing joystick, comprising:
a user-manipulable handle coupled to a base plate through a substantially rigid force-sensing element that allows only a slight deflection of the handle in response to an applied force;
an electrically conductive drive plate physically coupled to the handle; and
an electrically conductive surface physically coupled to the base plate and spaced apart from the drive plate,

wherein one or both of the drive plate and the conductive surface are segmented to produce multiple capacitive sensing elements without the need for any additional electrodes, such that a force applied to the handle causes a slight deflection of the drive plate, enabling the force to be computed in at least two dimensions through changes detectable in the capacitive sensing elements.

11. (New) The rigid, force-sensing joystick of claim 10, including four segments.

12. (New) The rigid, force-sensing joystick of claim 10, further including one or more electrical controls on the handle.

13. (New) The rigid, force-sensing joystick of claim 10, wherein the force-sensing element is composed of metal.

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14. (New) The rigid, force-sensing joystick of claim 10, wherein the force-sensing element is composed of plastic.

15. (New) The rigid, force-sensing joystick of claim 10, wherein the force-sensing element is necked-down.

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